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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the findings of a 1985 study of the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) summer school program. Statistics, charts and survey results provide a picture of the student population, school financial situation, course offerings, participant attitudes, etc. The APS summer school is self-supporting, but tuition is rising rapidly and teachers are still not being paid adequately. The APS "summer district" is larger than most regular term districts in New Mexico and serves several hundred students from communities outside Albuquerque. Serving about 4,700 youngsters in total, the main summer program draws about 71 percent of its population from "lower income" attendance areas at the elementary level, but only about 35 percent at the secondary level. While the high school population is relatively evenly split between make-up and acceleration programs, summer schoolers are almost exclusively in make-up programs at the middle school level; 75 percent are remedial at the elementary level. Course offerings have not changed much in recent years. Students, parents and teachers surveyed find the program a more positive educational experience than the offerings during the regular term, despite the fact that it has not been receiving the assistance it needs from supportive services in the district. Suggestions for improvement are included in the report. (PS)

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AUGUST, 1985

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ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

A comprehensive study of the main components of the APS summer school program was conducted during 1985. Smaller features like the Career Enrichment Center or special education offerings or other special programs such as MESA, summer camp and music were not included. Summer school administrators provided large quantities of existing data while the evaluator conducted almost five dozen in-depth individual teacher interviews and sent out approximately 6,500 student and parent surveys.

The APS summer school is self-supporting, but tuition is rising rapidly and teachers are still not being paid adequately. The APS "summer district" is larger than most regular term districts in New Mexico and serves several hundred students from communities outside Albuquerque. Many people connected with the summer school program hope that communication with the State Department of Education and the New Mexico legislature will result in some financial support for learning during the summer.

Having grown to the point where it serves about 4,700 youngsters, the main summer program draws about seventy-one percent of its population from "lower income" attendance areas at the elementary level, but only about thirty-five percent at the secondary level.

While the high school population is relatively evenly split between make-up and acceleration programs, summer schoolers are almost exclusively in make-up programs at the middle school level; seventy-five percent are remedial at the elementary level. Course offerings have not changed much in recent years.

Summer school students, parents and teachers give the program a high grade for its service to students and feel it is, in general, a more positive educational experience than the offerings during the regular term. This is a tribute to the principals and teachers, who have managed to conduct a quality program despite some rather difficult constraints.

The summer school program has not been receiving the assistance it needs from supportive services in the district. It is recommended in this report that a Summer School Planning Committee begin meeting this fall to better integrate regular term services with those provided during the summer. A Summer School Policy Handbook is now in draft form and the Committee could make final revisions this fall to allow its implementation for next summer's program.

Some other suggestions included in the report are listed below:

- conduct earlier site selection, hiring and registration
- carry out some form of needs assessment to help the instructional division in developing curricula
- determine which courses are suitable as acceleration programs and which are only fully experienced during the regular term
- weigh possibilities of allowing high school students to earn more than one credit during the summer

- clarify district procedures regarding failure of courses at the middle school level, standardizing make-up requirements
- schedule middle schoolers by grade level--not combining sixth through ninth graders into "best of middle school topics" classes
- contemplate pre-registration at sending schools, guaranteeing better guidance opportunities with counselors
- look into the advisability of lengthening summer school semesters
- give thought to extending the successful secondary level summer school attendance policy into the elementary summer program and enforcing a similar rule of action during the regular term
- hold down class size to allow the kind of individualization of program and attention that is valued so highly by parents and students
- provide more break time during the arduous, but productive, four-hour high school sessions

INTRODUCTION

Planning, Research, and Accountability (PRA) was asked during the spring of 1985 to conduct a comprehensive study of the imminent session. It is important to note that while this analysis covered the entire regular elementary, middle and high school summer program, it did not explore the special education or career enrichment center components or any other special summer programs such as MESA, summer camp or music. The Superintendent and her Executive Assistant as well as the Deputy Superintendent for Instruction helped formulate the evaluation questions which compose the structure for this report, with input from members of the Board of Education. Summer school administrators provided large quantities of existing data while the evaluator conducted almost five dozen individual teacher interviews and disseminated approximately 6500 student and parent surveys. In the interest of readability, only a summary of the highlights of the data collected is presented herein. Much more information is available from PRA files. In addition, summer school principals developed very specific recommendations for the Deputy Superintendent for Instruction; many of those more detailed suggestions are not repeated in this document, except as called for by the data. The more important proposed points for future consideration are highlighted in this report through bold printing.

Almost a quarter of a century ago (1961), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) produced a booklet on summer schooling. Its italicized shoulds and musts are reprinted below because, as will be noted repeatedly in this report, they are still extremely relevant to any serious consideration of the Albuquerque Public Schools' summer efforts.

1. In planning and executing summer programs, the concept of the year-round school must be pre-eminent in each phase of activity.

2. Planning for the summer program should result through cooperative endeavor on the part of members of the board of education, teachers, students, parents, and community leaders.

3. The identification of students'...needs must be the first consideration in planning summer education...activities.

4. Student participation in summer activities should be on a voluntary basis.

5. Counseling help should be available to assist students in working out their summer programs.

6. Summer programs for students should be based directly on the interests and needs of those who participate.

7. The relationship between work done during the summer and during the regular school year must be clearly defined.

8. A system of preregistration enables counselors to plan with students and facilitates correlation of the summer program with that of the school year.

9. The calendar of days and hours established for the summer program must reflect an understanding of the students involved and of the community served.

10. The success of a voluntary summer program rests in part upon the extent to which it captures the interests of students.

11. Organized evaluation is an essential part of summer school activities.

12. Persons concerned with the source of revenue for a local summer program must understand the provisions their state has made for summer activities.

13. Provision by local boards of education of funds necessary to operate tuition-free summer schools is a logical and desirable step in public education.

14. Whenever possible, the budget for the summer school should be integrated with the annual school budget.

15. All appropriate policies of the regular school term should apply with equal effect during the summer program.

16. Procedures for payment of teachers should be dependent upon the type of program established but should be consistent, if possible, with procedures used during the regular school year.

The informed reader might well be dubious about the origin of these statements. Most of them do, indeed, sound customized for the current APS summer school scene and this report. The reader is encouraged, however, to glean more regarding the justification for these "ancient" and nationally-focused pointers by perusing the 1961 ASCD booklet, "Extending the School Year," in the district professional library.

Q: "What should be changed about summer school?"

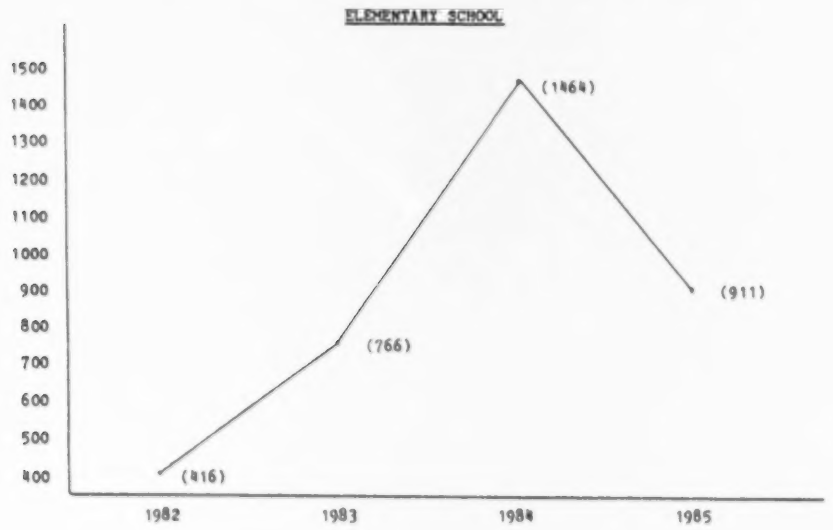
A: "I mean, let's face it, this <u>isn't</u> a country club or summer camp. I think summer school accomplished its goal of education."

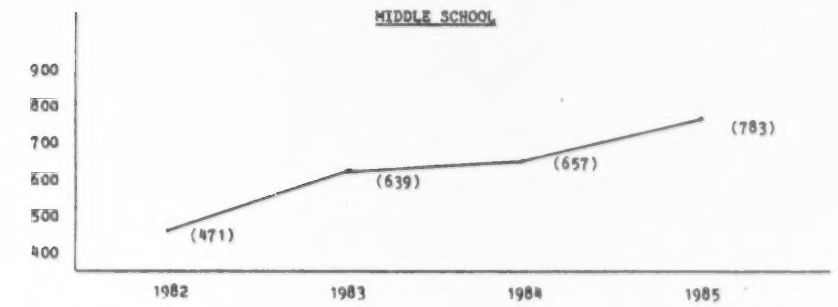
An Algebra II Student
Summer, 1985

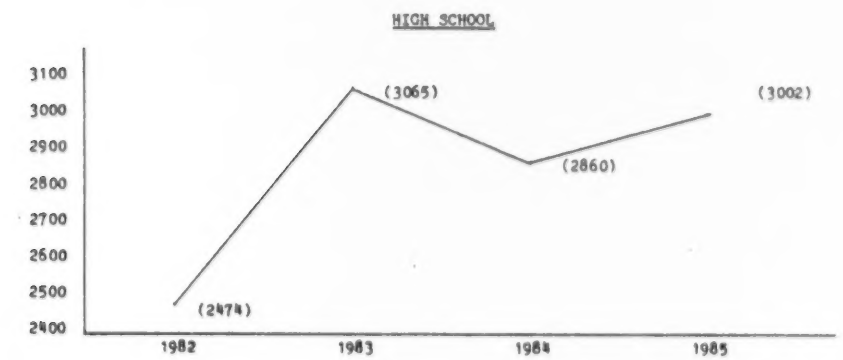
APS SUMMER SCHOOL - 1985

IS THE APS SUMMER SCHOOL GROWING OR DECLINING? WHAT IS THE TREND?

ENROLLMENT TRENDS FOR THE PAST FOUR (4) SUMMERS
Numbers of Students at Each Level Excluding Special Programs





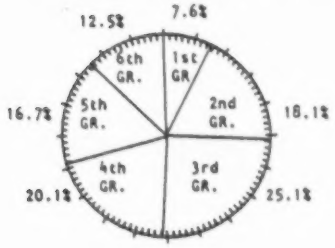


While enrollment is up at all three levels from the 1982 benchmark, only at the middle school level has it been a steady rise. Furthermore, the 1982 elementary figure is a bit depressed because that was the final summer of separate Chapter 1 programming and, thus, a considerable number of Chapter 1 youngsters who received services are not represented here.

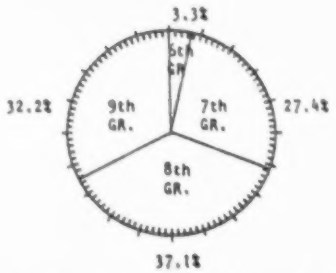
WHAT IS THE MAKEUP OF THE CURRENT STUDENT POPULATION?

PERCENTAGES OF SUMMER SCHOOL STUDENTS ENTERING EACH GRADE LEVEL IN 1985-86

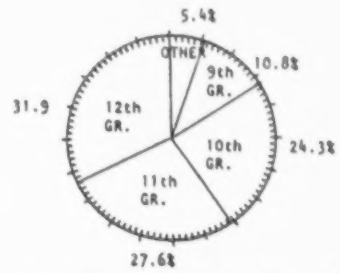
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



MIDDLE SCHOOLS



HIGH SCHOOLS



Four-fifths of the elementary summer school population had been in grades 1-4 during 1984-85. There is some concern regarding the seventy or so youngsters who came into the program straight from kindergarten. Likewise, some middle school teachers questioned the advisability of exposing a student to the middle school for the first time during a summer session. It is also interesting to note the large number of middle summer schoolers that the Data Services computer has "pushed on" to ninth grade for 1985-86. Was summer school necessary for promotion and how many of them made it? The answers to those questions are unavailable at this time. It is known however, that the 5.4% "other" slice of the high school population is comprised mostly of about 150 summer school graduates. They did make it.

About ten percent (10%) of the elementary, less than five percent (5%) of the middle and seven and a half percent (7.5%) of the high school populations came from outside of APS.

Do secondary schools contribute equally to the summer school population? The following table indicates that they do not:

SUMMER SCHOOL SENDING SCHOOLS

MIDDLE SCHOOLS	% 1984-85 Regular Education Population Attending 1985 Summer School**
Garfield	6.7%
Grant	6.4%
Hayes*	6.2%
Jackson	4.8%
Kennedy	4.5%
Taylor*	4.1%
Madison	4.0%
McKinley	3.7%
Lincoln	3.5%
Taft	3.2%
Wilson	3.0%
Adams	2.8%
Jefferson	2.8%
Cleveland	2.5%
Eisenhower	2.5%
Roosevelt	2.3%
Hoover	2.1%
Pyle	2.1%
Polk	1.9%
Harrison*	1.7%
Truman	1.5%
Van Buren	1.2%
Washington	1.0%

HIGH SCHOOLS	% 1984-85 Regular Education Population Attending 1985 Summer School**
Eldorado HS*	18.8%
Sandia HS	14.6%
Highland HS*	14.2%
Del Norte HS	13.1%
West Mesa HS*	12.1%
Manzano HS	11.8%
Cibola HS	9.4%
Valley HS	7.3%
Albuquerque HS	6.2%
Rio Grande HS	4.1%

*Summer School Sites

**These figures are a bit low since they do not include 1985-86 9th graders who attended middle summer school or summer high school graduates. By the time these data were collected APS master files no longer listed these youths' sending sites.

A student at Garfield was 570% more likely to attend summer school than one from Washington. A student at Eldorado was 359% more likely to attend summer school than one from Rio Grande.

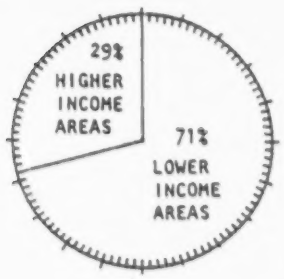
WAS THE SUMMER SCHOOL POPULATION SKEWED ALONG SOCIO-ECONOMIC LINES?

The sending school data referred to previously was further divided into two populations according to the 1985 Chapter 1 Free and Reduced Lunch Survey. For the purpose of this study, schools with higher percentages than the district norm were designated "lower income areas" and schools with lower percentages were called "higher income areas." The following pie graphs illustrate dramatically the difference between the elementary and secondary summer school populations:

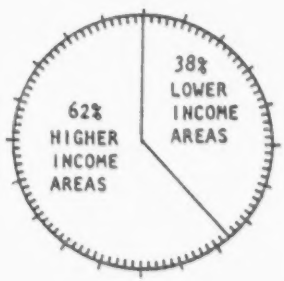
PERCENTAGES OF SUMMER SCHOOL POPULATION

COMING FROM APS ATTENDANCE AREAS

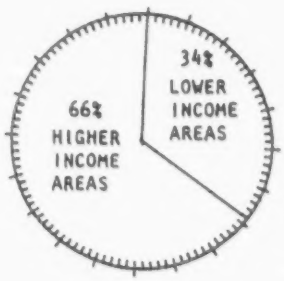
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



MIDDLE SCHOOLS



HIGH SCHOOLS



Since almost half of the elementary summer school enrollment was Chapter 1-funded, it is not surprising to find that the bulk of the population was from lower income areas. In fact, ten of the twelve sites (83%) were located in lower income areas. It is illuminating, however, to find a similar discrepancy, at both secondary levels, but in the opposite direction, despite the fact that two of the three sites at both middle and high school levels were in lower income areas.

How about ethnic makeup? Was it similar to the APS population during the regular term? In the table below, S.S. stands for summer school, R.T. for regular term and C.1. for the Chapter 1 population.

ETHNICITY OF 1985 SUMMER SCHOOLERS COMPARED
TO REGULAR TERM APS TOTAL AND CHAPTER 1 POPULATIONS

	Anglo			Asian			Black			Hispanic			Native American			Other		
	S.S.	R.T.	C.1	S.S.	R.T.	C.1	S.S.	R.T.	C.1	S.S.	R.T.	C.1	S.S.	R.T.	C.1	S.S.	R.T.	C.1
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Elementary	29.2*	54.2	16.9	1.7*	1.6	1.6	4.4*	3.7	4.8	54.2*	38.5	70.6	7.1*	2.1	5.1	3.4*	---	0.9
Middle	64.4	54.7	13.4	2.3	1.3	6.9	2.1	3.6	3.3	26.2	37.5	70.1	5.1	2.9	3.3	---	---	3.0
High	63.6	58.4	8.3	1.7	1.7	0.7	2.2	3.1	3.4	28.2	33.7	79.7	4.3	3.1	4.8	---	---	3.1

*These data were provided by parents during registration. They were not taken from the APS master file as was the case for middle and high school summer students.

Clearly, while the Anglo population was "underrepresented" during the summer at the elementary level compared to the regular term, it was "overrepresented" at the secondary level. The fact that Chapter 1 supported a large part of the elementary population, but relatively few secondary summer schoolers is certainly part of the explanation. In any case, it does appear that the summer school population was skewed along both income and ethnicity lines.

Tuition fees are, of course, a factor. Only about one-half of the summer high school students, for instance, are repeating courses; the other half choose to accelerate or enrich their education. Lower income area students and parents are less likely to have $100 per credit to spend for this purpose. Many of the students who did attend, as well as their parents, complained about the cost.

Lack of transportation also contributes to this discrepancy. Higher income families are more mobile--they have more cars and more money to spend on gas or bus fare. There is little doubt that more lower income area students could be attracted to school if free transportation were available as it is during the regular term.

Another element in this disparity is motivation. Almost all summer middle school students are there to "make up" a failure. How serious is APS about a failure? Some middle schools make it clear that a student must make up failure(s) if (s)he is to be promoted to the next grade level; others do not. The letter that goes home from data services to the parent is ambivalent: "To remediate this deficiency, he/she may attend summer school." It may be that more parents and students from higher income area schools feel the need to improve the academic record, especially as it involves a considerable amount of money to do so.

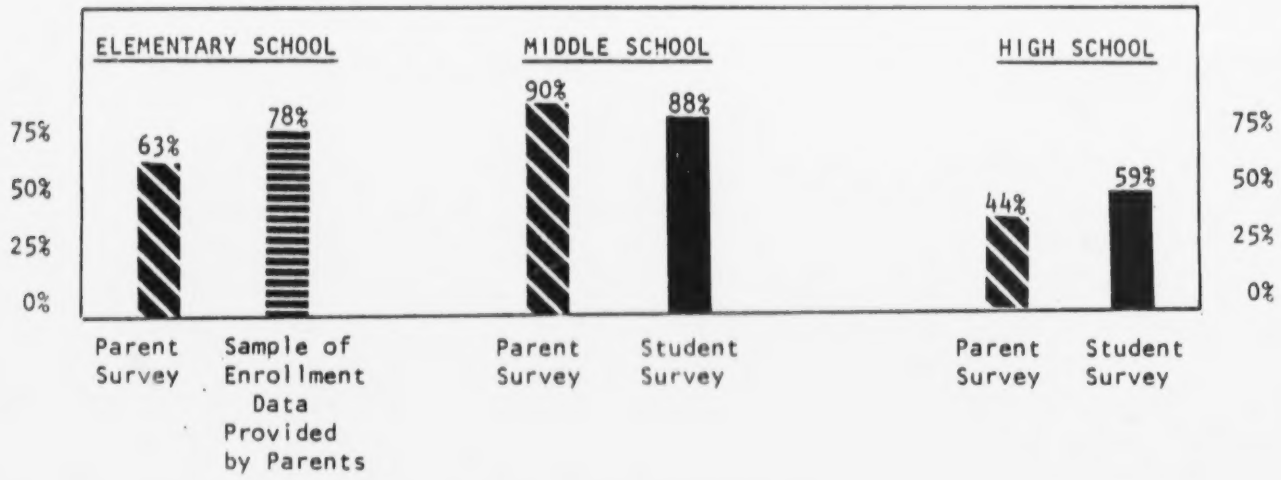
It must be mentioned that APS has tried special interest group payments and individual waiver procedures to ameliorate the differences. During the summer of 1985, Chapter 1 funded reading-related classes for almost 500 youngsters from lower-income areas. The Johnson-O'Malley and other Indian education programs paid for classes for approximately seventy-five Native American students. Hogares paid the fees for forty of its own. In addition, although it was not advertised, it was possible for any student or his/her parent to request an individual waiver of tuition fees. Sixty-eight students were granted such waivers and, thus, attended free of charge. Twelve English as a Second Language (ESL) students benefited from instruction sponsored by the Cross-Cultural Center.

From the sending school figures presented earlier, it is obvious that summer school enrollment is still biased to some extent by the three aforementioned factors. **It is recommended that the unrepresentative makeup of the summer school population be the subject of discussion and that a determination be made as to what should be done to try to bring enrollment more into balance.**

WHY DO STUDENTS ATTEND SUMMER SCHOOL?

The APS summer school combines, for the most part, "make-up" programs and programs for acceleration. It is not a simple matter, in many cases, to determine which students are taking courses for what reasons. Students and parents, therefore, were asked on their survey forms whether the student was repeating a course for remedial purposes or taking the course anew for enrichment. Elementary students were not surveyed, but many parents also replied to this question on the enrollment form and, thus, that data source is included as well on the graphs below:

PERCENTAGES OF SUMMER SCHOOL STUDENTS "PERCEIVED" AS REMEDIAL OR REPEAT



It appears that the high school summer program is almost evenly split between "make-up" and "get-ahead" students. The middle school group is very heavily weighted toward students repeating a course in an effort to improve skills or their grade or to make up a failure. The elementary program is also mostly remedial, but not to the overwhelming extent that the middle school is.

IS SUMMER SCHOOL CURRENTLY FINANCIALLY SELF-SUFFICIENT?

Yes, it is. As the table below shows, summer school final balances showed a surplus of almost $39,000 in 1984 and a little over $23,000 in 1985.

SUMMER SCHOOL FINAL ACCOUNTING REPORT*

	Elem.'84	Elem.'85	M.S.'84	M.S.'85	H.S.'84	H.S.'85
Tuition Income	42,979	45,570	42,257	49,244	223,635	246,530
Sp. Programs Incomes	59,268	34,146	5,538	4,536	20,236	8,968
Total Income	102,247	79,716	47,795	53,780	243,871	255,498
Total Expenses	100,521	80,420	46,423	49,700	208,257	235,609
Credit to S.S. Acct.	+1,726	-704	+1,372	+4,080	+35,614	+19,889

*It was not possible to break out just the regular elementary, middle and high school programs and, thus, these are the only data in this report which represent APS special summer programs as well.

ARE STUDENTS ATTENDING SUMMER SCHOOL ON A REGULAR BASIS?

Because of the extremely concentrated nature of the summer school courses, a summer school student misses a significant part of the program anytime (s)he is absent. At the secondary level, the summer school contracts with the student and parents to assure their understanding that more than one absence will be cause to disallow the student from gaining credit for completion of the course. This summer, seventy-seven (77) high school students (2.6%) and twenty-nine (29) middle school students (3.7%) were asked to withdraw for multiple absences. Thus, since very few exceptions were made, it is possible to conclude that 97% of the secondary students missed no more than one session per semester. Many of these students' problems stemmed from poor attendance during the regular term and summer school teachers reported dramatic improvements in performance that they attributed, at least in part, to the strict adherence to the attendance policy. One parent of a summer high schooler was emphatic: "I liked the method of attendance (monitoring) and the contract that has to be signed by student and parent if (the) student cuts a class." This measure is very strong and in some way should be placed into the regular school year. Thank you for helping our child." **Secondary level staff concur with this judgement and recommend that a similar policy be enforced by APS during the regular term.**

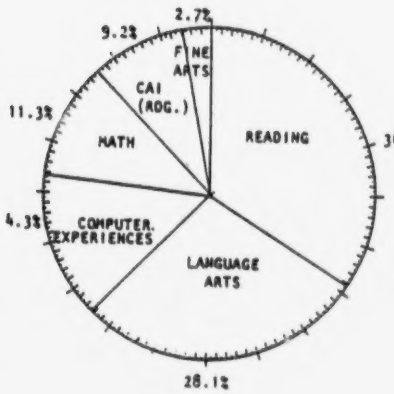
Without such a policy, attendance at the elementary sites was not as good. The average absence rate was almost four (4) days per session, the equivalent of missing twenty-three (23) days during the regular school year. One large site averaged almost 5.5 absences per child for the 30-day program.

Elementary teachers also expressed a concern that children whose parents were not paying tuition were less committed to the program and were not attending as often. One Chapter 1 parent, for example, had indicated on the enrollment form that her child would not be there on Thursday mornings, "because he likes to go bowling then." Since secondary teachers had expressed feelings that the paid tuition seems to lead to improved motivation, the evaluator decided to collect information comparing attendance of Chapter 1 and non-Chapter 1 students at the elementary level. Chapter 1 students averaged 4.21 absences while the mean for non-Chapter 1 students was 3.62. At one site where Chapter 1 students were very much the minority, they averaged ten (10) absences per child! **It is recommended that consideration be given to establishing attendance guidelines at the elementary level. In addition, some thought might be devoted to means of obtaining similar high levels of motivation from students whose tuition is subsidized as for those who pay for summer school.** One suggestion is to pay the fee for a student only after successful completion of the course; if he/she did not apply himself/herself nor attend regularly, the student would be responsible for payment.

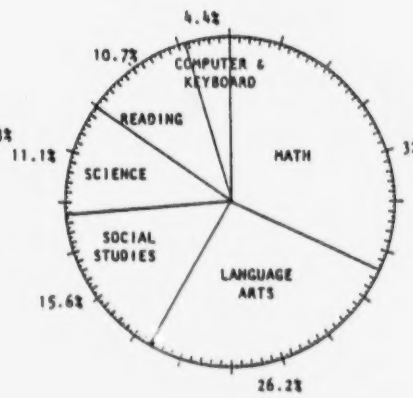
IN WHAT COURSES ARE STUDENTS ENROLLING?

PERCENTAGES OF ENROLLMENTS BY SUBJECT AREA - SUMMER, 1985

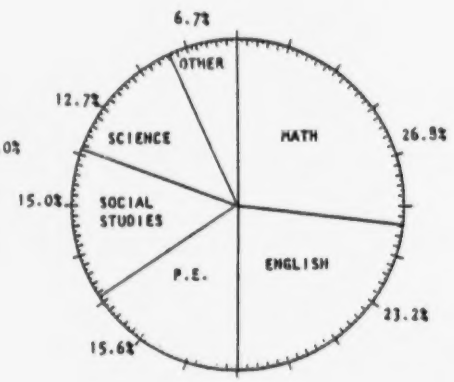
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



MIDDLE SCHOOL



HIGH SCHOOL



Almost three-fourths of the elementary enrollment is in reading and language arts. Those two subjects plus mathematics account for more than two-thirds of the middle school registration. Language arts and math signups are exactly half of the high school total. A further breakdown of high school offerings within subject area is available from PRA. The "other" category is comprised of health, Spanish, keyboarding, computers and radio technology.

HAVE COURSE OFFERINGS CHANGED MUCH DURING RECENT YEARS?

No, they haven't. A "pie" representing middle school enrollment during summer, 1984, looks almost exactly like the one for summer, 1985. According to David White, the director in charge of summer school for many years, "there never has been a systematic plan for developing summer school." Occasionally someone proposes a new course, but curricular design has not stemmed from any organized attempt to assess students' summer educational needs. Computer classes have found their place in the summer curriculum over the past two years, but few other topics have made inroads. Efforts have been made to introduce more language and fine arts offerings, but low enrollments have limited their implementation. **There is a real need for harnessing more of the expertise of the instructional division to help plan summer school courses.**

WHAT ARE THE COURSES REALLY LIKE? HOW SIMILAR ARE THEY TO THOSE OFFERED DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR (ESPECIALLY FOR HIGH SCHOOL REQUIRED COURSES)?

After having talked in depth with fifty-nine summer school teachers, it is very difficult for the evaluator to simply provide a flavor, rather than a complete description, of the curricular bill of fare.

Several elementary teachers spoke almost reverently of the inspiration they had received from Summer School Principal Anthony Blea's keynote comment: "This is your chance, teachers, to do all the things you feel these kids need." Many mentioned the need to "turn students back on," to work on their attitudes as well as their skills. Elementary summer school classes appeared more "relaxed" and most teachers were committed to some form of individualized instruction with students working at their own pace. Teachers literally buzzed about the opportunity for more creative activities; as one teacher put it: "the stuff regular teachers never get to." There was a conscious move away from rote learning by many teachers; one teacher bragged: "The students think they're playing!" Did teachers see such an environment as leading to a more or less positive educational experience than the regular term? Ninety-three percent rated the summer program as more positive; the lone dissenter had "mixed feelings."

Several middle school teachers complained about the difficulty of covering any one course's content with students from several grades in their rooms. Because of pupil/teacher ratio constraints, students who had not successfully completed a sixth grade course were grouped with students who failed seventh or eighth grade in the same subject area. Several summer school courses became "topics classes," or, as one teacher described his curriculum: "the best of middle school science." Given this problem, some teachers downplayed content somewhat, concentrating on study and organization skills in the hope of preparing the students for future courses, not belaboring what they had missed in past ones. As among the elementary summer school teachers, there was considerable discussion about motivation and attitude and the expressed desire to turn students on to learning. Middle school teachers were less certain that the experience was a total plus for the students. They perceived a significant portion of the student body to be angry about being there. Fifty percent judged the summer as more positive educationally than the regular term; forty percent assessed it to be less so.

The credit structure being as it is, high school teachers adhered far more closely to the regular term content in most cases. Math teachers, for example, described their courses as very similar to full semester offerings, often admitting they had chosen to pursue a "brutal" pace rather than water down the content. Science teachers seemed somewhat similar in their approach, although a few more of them described their curriculum as "less detailed." English and social studies teachers were more resigned to a high degree of condensing and skimming, although one English teacher was very enthusiastic about the effect on writing of the longer class time block. Physical education teachers characterized their offering as leisure-time or recreational activities, totally different in content and methodology from the required course taught during the fall and spring. They explained this as necessary due to the four-hour time blocks, the heat and the short duration of the semester. They, as well as several English and social studies teachers, do not feel that the summer course should be accepted as a substitute for the regular term requirement. They would limit enrollment to students who fail

during the regular term, other "special cases" or those who want to earn additional credits by taking this offering as a physical education elective. As mentioned earlier, **the district needs to reexamine its summer school offerings and determine which are suitable as acceleration programs and which are only fully experienced when taken during the regular term.** Finally, the Spanish and computer instructors were the most enthralled with the summer time block and the opportunities it fostered. They spoke of more intense involvement and significantly more learning. Sixty-two percent of the high school teachers deemed summer school a more positive educational experience for the students; twenty-seven percent looked upon it as less satisfactory.

ARE EXPECTATIONS AND/OR GRADING ANY DIFFERENT IN SUMMER SCHOOL THAN DURING THE REGULAR TERM?

Many teachers proclaim that their expectations of students are higher during the summer since students don't have to retain information for so long and their motivation should be enhanced since they pay for their learning. Several teachers pointed out that during the summer most students have more time available for homework. One health teacher commented: "I expect them to work twice as hard in the classroom since time is so limited...We cover eight chapters a week. They receive twenty-five handouts the first day!" Other teachers expressed the policy that, while they may not expect the same quantity of work due to time constraints, they expect the same quality or better. Only twenty-one percent of the teachers interviewed conceded that their expectations or grading standards might be any lower during the summer than during the regular term.

The West Mesa summer school students filled out a detailed questionnaire and the following data are the results from a sample of 220 students. When asked whether they thought summer school was easier or harder than the regular school year, eighty-one percent declared it to be easier. When asked, however, whether their teachers made them work for their grade, 100% said yes. Ninety-one percent proclaimed their teachers to be fair as opposed to too easy or too harsh. Perhaps most interesting of all, when asked whether they felt they had to work harder at summer school than regular school, forty-seven percent professed yes, forty-eight percent reported no and five percent said it was the same. In other contexts, students clarified the apparent contradiction: the summer school experience was easier to handle (only one class, more attention from a caring instructor, just three/six weeks to "hold on"), not necessarily easier in terms of the demands it placed upon them.

DID STAFF FEEL THAT THE LENGTH OF CLASS AND THE DURATION OF SUMMER SCHOOL WERE APPROPRIATE?

The time element is considered quite satisfactory as presently designed at the elementary level. Ninety-four percent of the teachers sampled like the one-hour sessions and seventy-six percent feel six weeks is an appropriate duration.

The secondary teachers find it more difficult to agree on a suitable timeframe. Most high school teachers were in accordance regarding the four-hour time block; seventy-seven percent favor it. They find they get a great deal accomplished and really get to know their students. Only one middle school teacher, however, wanted more than the current fifty-five minutes per class. Many middle and high school teachers are frustrated by their inability to cover their subject matter in three/six weeks. Exactly half of them would prefer a longer summer school span. As one noted: "A seven-week summer school would be better; it'd take some pressure off and we could add a little depth and color to our instruction." Many others would prefer two four-week semesters. **It is recommended that a Summer School Planning Committee look into the advisability of lengthening semesters for summer high school, perhaps for selected courses only.**

DO TEACHERS FEEL THAT THE MATERIALS AND FACILITIES PROVIDED ARE ADEQUATE?

During interviews, teachers provided the following responses:

	Situation is fine	It's okay, but could be better	It's a real problem
Elementary	29%	41%	29%
Middle	25%	50%	25%
High	41%	38%	21%

Clearly, there are some problems in this area. Some could be alleviated through earlier notification of teaching assignments. Many teachers complained of finding out that they would be teaching at the last minute, only to scramble around and find many important materials and supplies irretrievably packed away and locked up. There is some sentiment for a separate supplies and equipment budget for summer school since many sites are very sensitive about use of their books and equipment during the summer. Ready access to copying machines is also high on teachers' lists of concerns. High school teachers may be somewhat more satisfied because media centers and personnel provide assistance at each site. **A centrally located and active media center and a person expressly hired to assist elementary and middle summer school teachers in locating materials are two strongly supported suggestions for next year.**

Secondary schools surveyed teachers as to facilities. On a scale of "poor" to "excellent," most items were rated "good." The two items mentioned most often as needing improvement were custodial services and air-conditioning.

DO STAFF MEMBERS FEEL PROPERLY PREPARED TO FOLLOW UP AND WORK WITH CHAPTER 1 AND OTHER "SPECIAL" STUDENTS IN THEIR CLASSES?

During the interviews, teachers' responses were as follows:

	Manageable	Problematical
Elementary	47%	53%
Middle	43%	57%
High	43%	57%

Even some of the teachers who termed the current situation manageable had certain kinds of students whom they felt did not belong in their classrooms but were "getting by" this summer due to individual adjustments the teachers were able to make because of reasonably small classes. Special education students were most often mentioned as inappropriately placed in summer school classrooms, but almost as many teachers cited low-performing students, who should have been counseled into other settings, as a problem. There were also seven teachers concerned about poor English speakers not benefiting enough from their classes and five who felt behavior problem youths should have been removed from their rooms. High school teachers suggested that some students ought to wait a year, for the sake of maturity, before repeating a course and insisted that proper counseling is imperative to prevent students from skipping courses in a sequence, or even backtracking. One-third of the graduating seniors at one summer school were originally enrolled in the wrong classes! **It is recommended that consideration be given to pre-registration at home schools, guaranteeing better guidance from counselors.**

At one site, a few middle school teachers, and some parents, complained that a handful of students on drugs were a bad influence. Elementary teachers had a hard time with siblings quibbling and competing in the same classroom because of multi-age groupings.

There were very few complaints about being able to serve Chapter 1 students, but there were mixed reactions to the skill checklists provided through Chapter 1. It was difficult to establish any true consensus as to what information summer school teachers would prefer on entering students. While some would like cumulative folders passed on, others would opt for test scores/reading levels, still others for narratives as to why the sending school recommends summer school and yet others for no information at all. **A Summer School Planning Committee should grapple with this issue and come to some determination as to what data on each student should be available to summer school teachers.**

Some teachers came in early each day to reach out to individual students while others made a point of staying late. Few students availed themselves of this opportunity for extra assistance. As mentioned earlier, some of the subsidized students were perceived as less motivated and less cooperative. Special kudos seem to be in order for the Johnson O'Malley staff, whose communication with students, parents and staff was such that many Native American students made great strides this summer, according to teachers.

HOW DID STUDENTS, PARENTS AND TEACHERS ASSESS THE SUMMER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE?

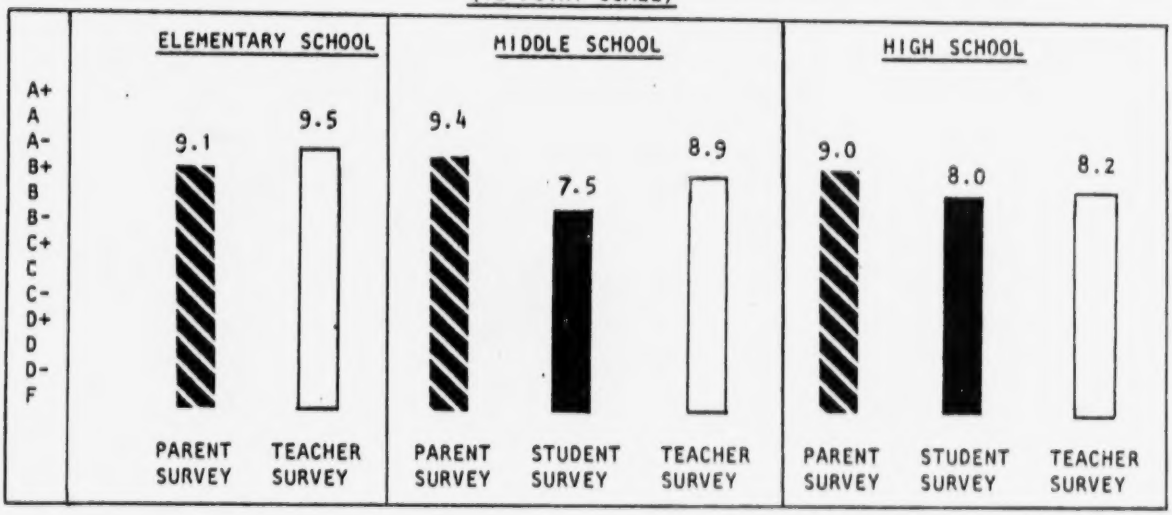
Brief surveys were mailed to about 1,750 parents of summer schoolers. Five hundred and forty-five were returned, for a thirty-one percent return rate.

About 2,500 survey forms were completed by secondary school students, a return rate of about sixty-six percent.

In-depth input was received from sixty teachers, about forty percent of the summer faculty.

All respondents were asked to grade the APS summer school, on a scale of A-F, as to how well it served its students. The results are graphed below:

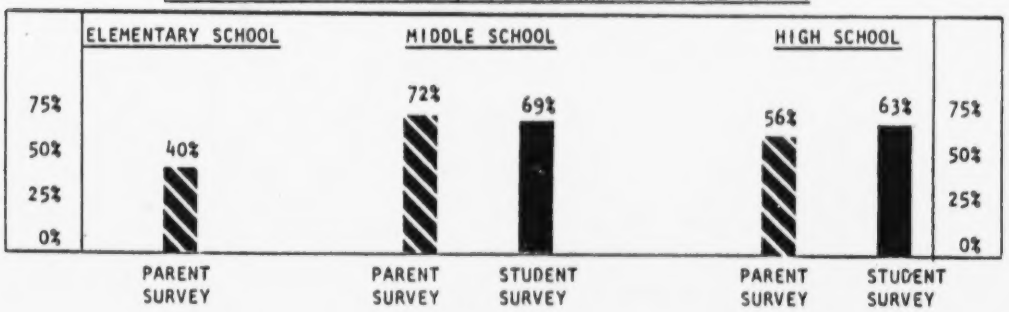
MEAN GRADE EVALUATING HOW WELL SUMMER SCHOOL, 1985, SERVED ITS STUDENTS
(12-POINT SCALE)



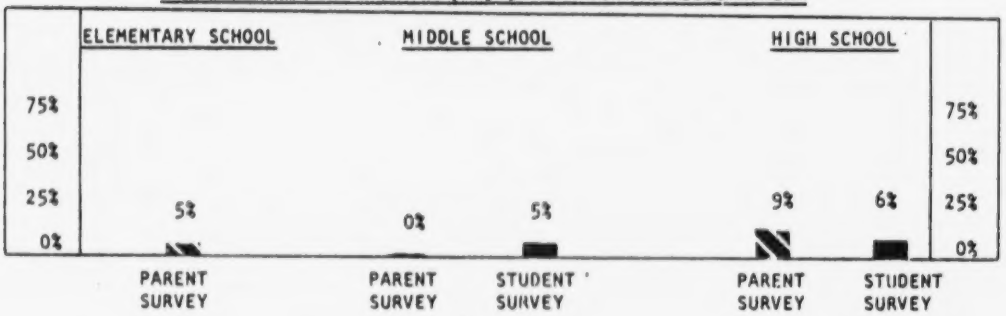
No group gives summer school much less than a "B" and parents at each level awarded it a "B+."

Parents and secondary students were also asked to compare summer school instruction to regular term instruction (teacher perceptions on this issue were reported earlier). It may be noted that the percentages do not add up to 100%. Responses not graphed below were tallies indicating that the quality of instruction was the same for summer and regular semesters.

PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS DEEMED TO HAVE RECEIVED BETTER INSTRUCTION DURING SUMMER, 1985 THAN DURING REGULAR TERM



PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS DEEMED TO HAVE RECEIVED WORSE INSTRUCTION DURING SUMMER, 1985 THAN DURING REGULAR TERM



While a majority of elementary parents found instruction to be similar between summer and regular terms, eight times as many found the summer session to be better than, as opposed to worse than, the regular sessions. Virtually no middle school parents, and very few students, rated the summer instruction as worse than the regular, while most of both groups found it to be superior. The favorable assessment is almost as impressive for the high school groups.

WHAT DO STUDENTS AND PARENTS LIKE MOST ABOUT SUMMER SCHOOL?

Items are listed below in descending order according to how many respondents mentioned them (without prompting) as an answer to the open-ended question on the survey:

ASPECTS OF SUMMER SCHOOL PREFERRED BY PARENTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS (N = 134)

(Number in parentheses indicates number of parents making this response to open-ended questions)

Smaller classes	(22)
Individualized program and attention	(12)
Quality of teachers and teaching	(10)
Summer school helps students retain what they have learned and prepares them for the following year	(9)
Children enjoy summer school	(9)
Children learn more	(9)
Program hours	(7)
Convenient locations	(7)
Computer classes	(6)
Better explanations; students understand more	(5)
Library programs	(5)
More informal atmosphere; less pressure	(5)
Opportunities for enrichment, challenge	(5)
Six-week duration	(5)

ASPECTS OF SUMMER SCHOOL PREFERRED

...BY PARENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS (N = 109)

Quality of teachers and teaching	(18)
Smaller classes	(13)
Individualized attention and instruction	(13)
Good discipline and, consequently, better student attendance and behavior	(10)
Good teacher/parent communication; weekly progress reports	(10)
Students learning and feeling better about themselves	(7)
Program hours	(7)
Student responsibility developed	(6)
More fun, less pressure	(5)
Opportunity to repeat class, improve grade	(5)
Accelerated pace	(5)

...BY THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS (N = 686)

Quality of teacher, teaching	(138)
Short school day	(77)
Meeting new friends	(48)
Learning more	(30)
Homework--the way it was handled	(22)
Activities, projects	(21)
*Lunch	(20)
Six-week duration	(19)
"It's easier"	(18)
Scheduling	(12)
More individual attention, help from teacher	(11)
Smaller classes	(11)

*Students apparently were unaware that the lunch program was not provided by APS.

ASPECTS OF SUMMER SCHOOL PREFERRED

...BY PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS (N = 302)

Opportunity to catch up, improve, get ahead	(53)
Short term, high intensity	(39)
Quality of teachers and teaching	(37)
Productive use of summertime; students are learning	(17)
Opportunity for students to concentrate on one course	(16)
Smaller classes	(16)
Half-day	(15)
Students enjoying summer school	(14)
Variety of PE activities; exposure to lifetime sports	(14)
Good rules and discipline and, consequently, better student attendance and behavior	(10)
Three-week semester	(10)

...BY THE HIGH SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS (N = 1813)

Three/six week duration of course	(275)
Quality of teacher, teaching	(237)
Meeting new friends	(188)
Short school day	(170)
Time off-campus (PE)	(161)
Fast pace of instruction	(90)
Opportunity to obtain credit, improve grade, get course out of way	(80)
Concentrating on one course	(71)
Learning more	(59)
Activities, projects	(42)
"It's easier"	(34)
More individual attention, help from teacher	(27)
Relaxed atmosphere	(26)
"It's fun"	(23)
Smaller classes	(18)

Parents of elementary summer schoolers especially appreciated the lower pupil/teacher ratios (ptr). As noted earlier, some teachers would like to see them still lower. **It is hoped that whatever changes take place in planning future summer school programs, every effort be made to hold down class size to allow the kind of individualized program and attention that is so clearly valued by parents.** The frequent mention of teacher/teaching quality should also not be missed.

Middle school parents and students place the quality of teachers and teaching at the top of their list as well. **It is recommended that everything possible be done to insure the continued excellence and commitment of summer school staffing, including consideration of appropriately reinforcing remuneration.** Middle school parents also value the smaller classes and increased individualization noted by the elementary parents. They are also pleased with the strict attendance policy, discipline, and communication with parents.

Students appreciate the short school day, and the opportunities to meet new teenagers as well as complete some of their homework during class. Many like knowing how much they are learning and enjoy the varied activities and projects in which they've become engrossed.

High school parents applaud APS for providing opportunities for students to catch up or get ahead. They like the amount of learning that takes place during a session which is still short enough to allow for some summer vacation. And, like their children, they salute the dedicated instructors. High school students appreciate receiving one-half credit for each three weeks of work and also enjoy a summer school day that ends around noon. The social benefits of summer school rank as high for them as they do for the middle school students.

WHAT PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE ARE ESPOUSED BY STUDENTS, PARENTS AND TEACHERS?

Elementary School
ITEMS NEEDING CHANGE

...ACCORDING TO PARENTS OF ELEMENTARY SUMMER SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS (N = 134)		...ACCORDING TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS (N = 17)	
Nothing	(31)	Provide more homogeneous grouping (fewer grade levels mixed together)	(6)
Increase daily time or total duration	(11)	Increase salary for summer school teachers	(6)
Cost, payment arrangement	(8)	Reduce class size even further	(5)
Improve communications with parents, especially regarding registration	(7)	Improve materials availability and assistance	(5)
Provide more variety of classes	(7)	Establish stricter attendance and behavior policy	(4)
Locations could be more convenient	(6)	Lower tuition to attract more students	(3)
More challenging, rigorous instruction	(5)		
Smaller classes	(5)		
Provide more individual instruction and attention	(5)		

The staff is divided as to whether elementary children would thrive with more summer school, due to the children's relatively brief attention spans. **It is recommended that the summer school planning committee consider providing two "semesters" of elementary summer school, each four weeks long, which would enable some students to have a truly brief refresher course and others to have a more in-depth experience than is currently possible. In addition, low pupil/teacher ratios should be established and adhered to.**

Both teachers and parents would like to see tuition costs reduced. This request is, of course, in direct contradiction with the desire to raise summer school teachers' salaries. Most faculty members are quite experienced, although collecting only a first-year teacher's hourly wage, and they put in large amounts of unpaid preparation time. **It is recommended that APS work on a long-range basis with the State Department of Education and the legislature in an effort to gain public funding to support continuing education during the summer.**

While not tallied in response to the "items needing change" interview question, a few more suggestions were offered by several elementary teachers as a result of other inquiries. **More enriched curricula, with additional sites in the Heights, were called for, as were improved registration procedures. It was felt that consideration must also be given to an attendance and behavior policy which fosters the best possible classroom climate for learning.**

Middle School

ITEMS NEEDING CHANGE

(Numbers in parentheses indicate number of persons making this response to open-ended questions)

...ACCORDING TO PARENTS OF PARTICIPANTS (N = 109)		...ACCORDING TO SUMMER SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS (N = 686)		...ACCORDING TO SUMMER SCHOOL TEACHERS (N = 11)	
Location could be more accessible, convenient	(25)	Nothing--leave as is	(176)	Increase daily time or or total duration	(4)
Nothing	(19)	Full hour is too long	(42)	Pay teachers for some preparation time	(4)
Improve communication with parents, especially re registration	(9)	Starts too early--8 A.M.	(36)	Increase salary for summer school teachers	(3)
Cost	(7)	Need better air-conditioning system	(34)	Clarify district policy re purposes of middle level summer school and standardize requirements re making up failures	(3)
		Some of the teachers	(28)	Keep class sizes low	(2)
		Rules, especially tardy/ attendance policy	(26)	Separate grade levels for homogeneity of content	(2)
		Site/location	(26)	Provide special funding for summer school supplies	(2)
		Too much homework	(23)	Place more emphasis on self-improvement and inner motivation; make summer school a positive, not punitive experience	(2)
		More rigorous instruction	(23)		
		Food situation	(22)		
		Cost	(13)		
		Principals	(12)		
		Slower Pace--it's too much work	(10)		

It is imperative that the district clarify its procedures regarding failure of courses at the middle school level. Makeup requirements ought to be the same for students whatever school they attend. If the decision is to become stricter about requiring summer school, more middle school sites will be necessary. If ensuring that a student learns a particular course content is important, then it will probably also be incumbent upon the district to provide more time (two-hour classes or 4-week semesters) and more appropriate scheduling (not combining 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grade social studies). The salary situation must also be addressed at the middle school level. In addition to having several preparations, like the elementary teachers, many of the middle school instructors are taking home four or five hours' worth of papers to be graded nightly. Teachers feel strongly that they should be paid for some preparation time.

High School

ITEMS NEEDING CHANGE

...ACCORDING TO PARENTS OF PARTICIPANTS (N = 302)

Nothing
P.E. class needs revamping (Curriculum, cost, better use of facilities, more challenging, grading)
Cost
Improve communication with parents, especially re registration
Locations could be more convenient
Students need longer or more frequent breaks
Transportation/parking a real problem
Provide greater variety of courses
Reorganize to allow student to obtain more than one credit per summer

...ACCORDING TO SUMMER SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS (N = 1813)

(60) Students need longer breaks
Nothing--leave as is
Four hour classes too long
Need more breaks
(27) Starts too early--8 A.M.
(17) Rules, especially tardy/attendance policy
Need better air-conditioning
(15) system
Cost
(14) Transportation/parking
Food situation
(14) Some of the teachers
Slower pace--it's too much work
(12) Amount of homework
Need more variety of courses
(11) Principals
Site/location
Opportunity to earn more credit
(10) More on-campus PE

...ACCORDING TO SUMMER SCHOOL SCHOOL TEACHERS (N = 31)

(667) Eliminate "open registration;"
(221) hold students to assigned
(170) sites (8)
(159) Provide a longer semester (8)
(115) Provide a better salary (8)
Pay teachers for preparation
(74) time (6)
Only allow certain courses
(57) for acceleration credit
(53) (e.g. not required P.E.) (5)
(45) Do not require 4-hour
(39) periods for some courses (4)
(38) Pay teachers commensurate
(33) with their experience (4)
(31) Keep classes small (3)
(22) Provide curriculum develop-
(21) ment services for summer
(20) school (3)
(19)
(18)

(Numbers in parentheses indicate number of persons making this response to open-ended questions)

Parents, PE teachers and some students expressed real concern over the required PE course offered during the summer. Several hundred students took it "to get it out of the way." What they got was recreation, not physical education. Many parents were upset about the activities engaged in, the amount of time off campus with resulting "unannounced" transportation and expense difficulties, and an apparent last-minute change in grading from letter grades to pass/fail. Physical education teachers feel strongly that the six-week program does not lend itself to the fitness- and instruction-

oriented model inherent in the lone required PE course at the high school level. **It is recommended that consideration be given to not offering the required P.E. course in the summer, no longer enabling students to avoid "the real thing" over 180 days. The recreation course could be continued as a PE elective during the summer, but parents and students should be better apprised regarding the activities which will be scheduled off campus, transportation and expense factors and grading policy.**

Some students and a few teachers find four hours to be "a bit much," but, in general, the one course approach seems efficient and well-received. **Perhaps scheduling exceptions could be made for a few courses which do not seem to fit the four-hour format. There is some interest in providing the opportunity for students to earn more than one credit during the summer. This ought to be investigated very carefully before implementation, to ensure that it will not dilute the educational experience. In addition, it may be necessary to lengthen the semesters in order to adequately duplicate regular term courses. This would severely limit the possibility of adding another summer semester.**

The issue of the need for longer breaks during the morning was repeated so often that the evaluator suspected an organized campaign was afoot, until it was realized that the issue was brought up consistently at each site. Teachers, and parents as well, would support some additional respite during such an intense instructional day. Some teenagers probably do require a chance to obtain and devour a snack, and the present two ten-minute or one fifteen-minute break arrangement has not been sufficient. Given their tremendous appreciation of the opportunity to meet new and interesting people at summer school, **establishment of a 25-minute break during the heart of the morning, would likely be relished by students and teachers alike as a modification designed to meet their needs. Further, teachers should be encouraged to allow for more frequent five-minute "adjustment times" in the classroom, acknowledging everyone's need for a refresher.** This provision for breaks may require a slightly later dismissal time, but hopefully would not require APS to get into the lunch business during the summertime. While there is quite a bit of support for starting classes later than 8:00 a.m., it is because of the lunch consideration and the likelihood of increased transportation difficulties for parents that a later start-up is not recommended at this time.

The imbalance of registration among the three sites has occurred for years. It is felt that requiring students to attend the site closest to their home schools would improve the offerings at all locations. **Summer school staff, therefore, urge the Summer School Planning Committee to establish a firmer commitment against open registration. Sites, as well as summer school personnel, also need to be selected much earlier to avoid problems such as lack of access to local swimming pools, parking lot over-congestion, and inadequate air-conditioning.**

WHAT ARE CURRENT HIRING PRACTICES AND POLICIES?

Briefly, committees at each level (usually comprised mostly of directors, a position no longer in abundance) typically select principals sometime in April. The principals, operating with little assistance, select their summer school staffs in May. Some decisions are made even later, literally at the last minute, especially when enrollment surprises raise havoc with plans.

Teachers are usually hired to teach the same subject they instruct during the regular term, but some request assignment in another area of certification to update their skills or for the sake of variety. Among this summer's interview sample, about eighteen percent were serving their fifth or more year in summer school. Almost sixty percent were teaching summer school for their first or second time. The group averages more than ten years of regular term teaching experience in APS, however. Some teachers would like to see a form of summer school seniority system. It is a tribute to the principals that the teaching staff selected during the spring rush was excellent. Only three percent of the student sample at West Mesa, for example, felt their lessons were not well planned or organized. Only two percent deemed their teacher not knowledgeable in the course subject matter. Ninety-six percent felt their teacher helped them with their work when they encountered problems.

Currently, if a teacher must be absent he/she must find his/her own substitute, who is paid the teacher's wage for that day. There is no teaching contract and many teachers are uncomfortable working without one as liability and commitment concerns are left unresolved.

WHAT IS THE RECOMMENDED STRUCTURE FOR FUTURE SUMMER SCHOOL PLANNING?

The above section on hiring policies and practices was requested as an area of special interest, but was also included as an example of an area of planning that needs review. A Summer School Policy Handbook is currently in draft form and was reviewed recently for appropriateness by all summer school administrators. Its underlying premise is shared by the evaluator and will serve as the major recommendation for this section: **"Summer School is an extension of the regular school program in APS. Guidelines and requirements governing summer school (should be) equivalent to those in effect during the regular school year. Each APS department (should be) responsible for carrying out its regularly designated responsibilities for summer school."**

Using our hiring practices example, many of the summer school procedures are inconsistent with APS practices during the regular term. For instance, the APS Human Resources Department should have an earlier and more integral part in the process and the APS substitute desk should be responsible for coverage of classrooms when a summer school teacher must be absent. Teachers would like to be operating under a summer school contract or, at least, an extension of their regular term agreement. They have asked for instructional assistance from such units of the instructional division as PRA's Testing Services Center and the Curriculum Center, although these units do not currently operate during the summer months.

Similarly, each APS regular term site ought to help in the publicizing to, and the counseling and recruiting of, summer school students, while the Public Information Office carries the summer school message to the community-at-large. **Summer school has grown to be too large and too important to continue to be seen as an orphan of the district, pushed to one corner and expected to thrive on its own. It must be fully incorporated into the district program as a whole.**

It is recommended that the district establish this fall a Summer School Planning Committee to review all suggestions in this document, and more, and refine the Policy Handbook for implementation. The Planning Committee should meet regularly until both short term and long term directions for summer school have been made explicit.

Ti and LOIS
By Mort Walker and Dik Browne
GEE WHIZ! IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR SCHOOL AGAIN.
DIK BROWNE 8-21
WHERE DID THE SUMMER GO?
IT JUST WENT.
MAYBE IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO CATCH UP WITH IT.